



Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

opi.mt.gov

EXHIBIT 2
DATE 4-19-11
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Overview of the GRANT: Montana Schools of Promise – School Mental Health Initiative

I. Brief Description of the Project

The Office of Public Instruction received funding from the Montana Mental Health Trust to launch a replicable, school-based mental health model within schools on three of our state's Indian Reservations. These schools are a part of OPI's *Montana Schools of Promise* initiative, which seeks to dramatically improve the quality of education in our state's schools. This model will engage school, family and community in a collaboration to develop effective school mental health "wrap round" supports and services for students.

The OPI is partnering with local Tribal Governments, Indian Health Services, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the state Department of Public Health and Human Services, and the University of Montana, and will be supported by nationally-recognized experts in school-based mental health and wrap around. The impact of this two-year pilot will add greatly to state's approach to school-based mental health efforts in Montana, and to the national dialog about how to establish integrative mental health supports in rural communities. Support from the Trust will provide start-up funding for three wrap around "facilitators," administrative coordination and related program expenses.

II. Montana Schools of Promise

Montana Schools of Promise was established in 2009 under the leadership of State Superintendent Denise Juneau to significantly improve the quality of education in Montana's most struggling schools. Schools were identified based on student test scores, administrative and financial mismanagement, dropout rates and other related data.

Central to the *Schools of Promise* initiative is the mental health and well being of students. It is well known that students learn better when their mental health needs are met. The OPI is very committed to supporting the development of a more cohesive approach to school-based mental health supports.

III. For more information

Contact Deborah Halliday, OPI Policy Advisor (406-444-3559; dhalliday@mt.gov)

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The Montana Office of Public Instruction provides vision, advocacy, support, and leadership for schools and communities to ensure that all students meet today's challenges and tomorrow's opportunities.